Designing in employability: group activity

Collection: Course design

Resource: Designing an English degree programme

Approximate duration

One hour to 90 minutes

Learning outcomes

This activity is designed to help participants focus on the processes involved in the design and launch of an English degree programme. Carrying out this activity should help participants to

1. acquire insight into how institutional procedures and cultures impact for good or for ill on teaching situations and aspirations;
2. acquire the confidence to propose and argue to colleagues for a new form of assessment, of teaching, or module, e.g. an employability module;
3. acquire a critical understanding of curriculum and its constituent parts in any given degree and how these relate to students' employability prospects.

Introduction

Some English lecturers feel that focusing on employability is an unwelcome demand on scarce time and that it cannot be a significant priority. This situation is changing, however: many English departments now expend a great deal of energy helping their students think about future employment possibilities.

Perhaps it helps to think of employability as a set of achievements – not only skills, but also understandings and personal attributes – that make graduates more likely to gain

employment and be successful in their chosen occupations--achievements that most academics either value in their own right or are necessary for academic success.

The activity

1. For this activity you will need a computer linked to a data projector.

Use the Word document contained with this resource in HumBox. Each page in this document is headed with a list of the 'top ten' qualities that employers value in English graduates. The list is as follows:

1. Motivation and enthusiasm
2. Interpersonal skills
3. Team working
4. Oral communication
5. Flexibility and adaptability
6. Initiative/productivity
7. Problem solving
8. Planning and organisation
9. Managing own development
10. Written communication

2. Distribute the handout with the list of top ten qualities to each participant.

3. In a plenary brainstorming session, go through the list discussing with the participants the following:

(a) ways in which a given quality is already developed in their institution(s)

(b) ways in which it might be developed further on their programme.

As the discussion develops, type the most important points in connection with each heading on the relevant page, moving forward to a new page as the discussion moves on to a new heading. Tell the participants that you will email them copies of the Word file after the session.

4. Conclude by discussing, still in the plenary group, ways in which students can be made more aware of their skills.

Relationship to the Professional Standards Framework

- **Core Knowledge 2:** Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme
- **Professional Values 3:** Commitment to the development of learning communities
- **Professional Values 4:** Commitment to encouraging participation in higher education, acknowledging diversity and promoting equality of opportunity

More information about the Professional Standards Framework can be obtained from the summary factsheet in the *Subject & Pedagogy* collection in HumBox.
http://humbox.ac.uk/2731/

Resources in the Course design Collection

- Course design: introduction to the collection
- Designing an English degree programme: resource overview
    - Designing in employability: individual activity
    - **Designing in employability: group activity (*you are here)**
    - Managing transition from A Level: individual activity
    - A delicate balance: group activity
    - A delicate balance: individual activity
- Designing an innovative English Literature module: resource overview
    - Location, location, location: individual activity
    - Location, location, location: group activity
    - Questions, questions
    - Integrating research into a module: individual activity
    - Integrating research into a module: group activity
- Filling the gaps: resource overview
    - Filling the gaps between sessions: individual activity
    - Filling the gaps between sessions: group activity

- Adapting a module: resource overview
  - Adapting a Literature module: individual activity
  - Adapting a Literature module: group activity
  - Pacing it out: individual activity
  - Curriculum framing
- Mapping and applying desirable student attributes: resource overview
  - Imaginary modules: individual activity
  - Imaginary modules: group activity
- Designing a creative-critical module: resource overview
  - Thinking about modules: individual activity
  - Thinking about modules: group activity